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RECOLLECTIONS OF MISS CLOUGH AND
HER CONNEXION WITH P.N.E.U.*

BY THE EDITOR.

I AM glad to have an opportunity to write of the *impulse* which I feel the Parents' National Educational Union owes to Miss Clough. In order to give a clear idea, it is necessary, I think, to say a few words about the origin of this Society. In 1885, ~~at which~~, I delivered a course of lectures to ladies in Bradford, afterwards published under the title of *Home Education*. This led to a desire that a society of parents should be formed to further education on the lines indicated in that work. A working scheme was drawn up and carried out in Bradford, with much success, by a committee of friends. After a year's very prosperous work in Bradford, it was felt that the idea of the Society had justified itself, and that it might be safely brought before a wider public. Before attempting to spread the Society, I took counsel with a large number of persons who appeared to me to be leaders of thought: such as the then Bishop of London (the present Archbishop of Canterbury), the Rev. J. C. Welldon, Miss Beale, Miss Buss, Sir J. Fitch, Professor Sully, Canon Liddon and many others. I wrote at considerable length to each of these, explaining the principles and methods of the proposed Parents' Union, which, indeed, was already in operation and doing good work in one locality. Opinions and criticisms were invited, and were, in every case, freely and cordially given; and perhaps it is to this thorough thrashing out in the first place we owe the fact that the P.N.E.U. has worked ever since with hardly a hitch.

Miss Clough was naturally among the first of those leaders of thought to whom I wrote, not only on account of her position as Head and Foundress of Newnham, but because I held her in high honour, though I had not yet the privilege of knowing her personally. She wrote:—

"I am much interested in what you tell me about the new Society. The work should be done locally as much as possible," etc.

* Written in response to a request from Miss B. A. Clough for a few particulars for her forthcoming Memoir, and allowed to appear in the *Parents' Review* by her kind permission.

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I had a good many communications from her, always brief and always to the same effect: *i.e.*, she insisted that the work of the Society should be *local*. Miss Clough dreaded centralisation for the Parents' Union, because she felt that living work must arise out of local needs,—that centralisation was an evil, because it tended to substitute mere bureaucracy for the vitality which should be the sole *raison d'être* of any society. I attached very particular weight to Miss Clough's opinions, not only for the sagacity which everyone recognized as her gift, but because I happened to know (through a friend) a good deal of her work in Ambleside, before she began to take an active, or rather, public, part in the Higher Education movement. I knew that she, almost alone I thought amongst educationalists, had very strong sympathy with parents. She united in a unique way the old and the new. She understood and believed in parents of the sort who educated their children quietly on the lines of *Evenings at Home*, etc. She had no sympathy with the cry which for a while obtained amongst educationalists,—“Oh, that children were born without parents!” Possibly the High School movement appealed so strongly to her, because day-schools give parents more opportunities for training their children than do boarding-schools. Anyway her respect for parents *per se*, and her regard for their convenience and consideration for their wishes, were very pronounced, and, from her, I felt I should get real and active sympathy in a movement intended to bring parents to the front, as recognized *educators* of their children, at a time when the extraordinary ability and force of character of many head-masters and mistresses had a tendency to throw the educational (in the sense of training) work of parents into the background.

Insistence upon local effort, small beginnings, quiet working and steadfast effort, was the note of all Miss Clough's communications relative to the P.N.E.U. It would be difficult to say how much her line of thought on the subject influenced us and how much it fell in with our own; but it is quite certain that these are the lines upon which we still work. The Union grows solely through its own vitality. There is no attempt made to advertise it through press notices or otherwise. It is offered, so far as we can overtake the demand, to all who desire it, and it is never urged upon

those who do not do so. Each new Branch is formed in consequence of a *local* demand and by means of *local* effort, the central office giving the necessary instructions and furnishing pamphlets, etc.

Thus a vigorous and powerful Society has grown up, worked, however unintentionally, upon the very lines Miss Clough indicated.

I had an evidence in those early days of Miss Clough's practical kindness and considerateness. There was a great deal of expense in the way of printing, posting and travelling connected with the early propaganda of the P.N.E.U. Of one considerable pamphlet alone 3,000 copies were printed and posted, commonly with letters. A good many generous friends would, no doubt, have helped in this expense, but it did not occur to me to ask them, partly because I have a great objection to carrying out an enterprise of personal initiation at public cost, and partly because the proposed Union should appeal to parents of the wealthier class, and therefore, I thought, should not divert funds from other objects. But Miss Clough sent me £5 entirely of her own accord, because, she said, she knew how heavy my expenses must be. I imagine this is only a single instance of a practical, thoughtful kindness and generosity which was a feature of Miss Clough's character.

There followed an invitation to Newnham, the date of which I do not recollect. I wrote much of the pamphlet (circulated under the odd name of the *Draft Proof*) in the train, in order that I might discuss it with Miss Clough point by point. My visit to Newnham was very delightful and inspiring. Everything was interesting (I had not been in Cambridge before); but perhaps the chief interest was the personality of my hostess and her relations with her students, with her immediate friends and supporters, and with members of the University. I think I was struck most of all by her sincere and extreme respect for other people; for individuality, in the first place, and then an added respect, whether for parts or official position. She exemplified, more than anyone I have ever known, Goethe's ideal of reverence for that which is above you, that which is below you, and that which is on a level with you; and this attitude of hers was met by a tender deference on the part of her friends and those associated

with her in the management of the college that was quite beautiful to see. I think it would hardly be possible for an advocate of advanced and liberal opinions to be more free from aggressiveness than was the late principal of Newnham. Her extreme friendliness with each of her students, her interest in their belongings, and her intimate knowledge of their pursuits and aims were extraordinary. One of the most interesting things to a looker-on was that communal life could be so arranged as to give full scope to the individuality of each student. Indeed, one was inclined to regret that the revered principal kept her own personality so much in the background, appearing to have little sense that it was so valuable a factor among the influences of Newnham.

Her fostering care of the people who laboured under disadvantages, older students who broke in upon a teaching career to secure a year at Newnham, for instance, was very marked. Indeed, her power of appreciating everybody on her own lines, whether of extraordinary talent or of unusual disadvantages, was probably unique, and must have helped to give a happy sense of equality to all the Newnham students. I recollect that Miss Philippa Fawcett dined at the high table one day while I was there, and I was told of her unusual powers; and, at the same time, Miss Clough expressed great interest in another student on account of her disabilities. I wished much to consult with Canon Westcott (now Bishop of Durham), who was interested in the Parents' Union, so Miss Clough secured him to meet me one evening. There were other guests, among them Mrs. Creighton, the Hon. Mrs. Lyttleton and Miss Helen Gladstone, and a lively and able discussion of the principles of the P.N.E.U. took place. But, alas, such a discussion was not calculated to draw out the opinions of Canon Westcott, whose habit seemed rather to think seriously upon a subject and give the result in a few weighty words, somewhat, I thought, in Miss Clough's own style. The counsel we did elicit from him was very much to the same effect as that which Miss Clough herself had already given. I was greatly struck by the entire deference of mind which seemed to be Miss Clough's attitude, towards this great thinker and teacher; indeed, I noticed this attitude of deference towards all the University authorities, as if, having contended for the prize of an equal education

expressing definitely the views it was designed to advance. This was one of the matters we threshed out while I was at Newnham. I was anxious to have contributions from Miss Clough's pen, but she maintained stoutly that writing was not her *forte*, that she was a woman of action, not of words, which was probably true. Anyway she did promise us a contribution and sent *Some Thoughts about Early Training*, a great help to the *Parents' Review*. She took a most active interest in the magazine (*Parents' Review*), making it known widely among her friends and subscribing for a dozen copies for a year. Miss Clough early consented to be a member of the Council of the P.N.E.U., and she took the office seriously, going carefully into every question that was brought before her. My last recollection of the late Principal of Newnham is connected with a meeting of the Council held in the great hall of the College of Preceptors (through the kindness of the late Rev. R. H. Quick). She was known personally to only a few members of the Council, and there was a general buzz when she entered the hall of—"Who is that lady?" I felt it great promotion to do the honours of the occasion! Miss Clough not only *was* a personage of distinction, but she had the gift of looking what she was. In Cambridge, on ordinary occasions, if her dress was remarkable at all, it was so for its disregard of appearances, but this was an occasion which she honoured and she came to us exquisitely dressed in rich black silks, fashioned to suit her own dignified personality. This meeting of the Council was called for the final discussion of the Principles and Objects of the Parents' National Educational Union. Several leading educationalists, members of the Council, were present. The Rev. Canon Daniel, Rev. R. H. Quick, and the Rev. T. W. Sharpe, H.M.I., Miss Shirreff, I think, Miss Buss, Mrs. Steinthal, etc. The debate was long and earnest; Miss Clough took part in the discussion upon every clause, and the result of the meeting was the Principles and Objects of the P.N.E.U. in their present and final form. Thus Miss Clough was intimately connected with a Society, which can hardly fail to have a marked effect upon the future of our country, from its first inception to its organic maturity, and the P.N.E.U. is among the advanced and far-reaching educational movements with which her name may ever be associated.

(Signed) C. M. MASON.

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for women as for men, she was anxious to receive it rather as a boon conceded than as a right successfully claimed.

We had long talks about many things, and I wish I could recollect the substance of them. She used few words, threw out suggestive sentences containing an always sagacious, pithy and often very humorous summing up of the point, and gave the sense of repose that one has in talking to the wise.

I had the honour of pleasant walks "in the Backs" with her, and recollect her amusing description of a little *fracas* early in the history of Newnham. There were only five students then, and their proceedings were watched with jealous eyes, and Cambridge was greatly scandalised that the Newnham ladies carried their tennis racquets into King's College Chapel, when they attended Evensong. It was vain to say they had not done so, but had left them in the porch. The little storm would have its way; "we waited till it all blew over."

Miss Buss happened to be in Cambridge at this time, and it was interesting to notice the sort of kindly *camaraderie* between two leaders in the movement for the better education of women, tempered, I thought, with special respect on the part of Miss Buss. Miss Clough seemed to me to have a sort of happy way of managing by suggestions which had the force of commands. She settled thus all that Miss Buss and I were to do together, and gave me opportunities for much valuable talk with the Principal of the great North London School. I found Miss Clough a very charming hostess; she arranged that I should meet a good many interesting people, and should see what was of most interest in Cambridge, and, when I was going, she remarked that she thought few people had had more opportunities than I of knowing the life of Cambridge in a short visit. But, as I have already said, the most vivid impression carried away was that of the personality of my hostess. I will not say anything of my impressions of the College, as, no doubt, many have written on this subject; and, indeed, the recollection of chats, four feet on the fender, in her little sanctum, furnished with the plainness of an anchorite's cell, are more interesting than more impressive scenes.

When the P.N.E.U. came to be launched in London it was immediately apparent that the Society must have an organ